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October 27, 2005

To: Katharin Kelker, Board Chair  
Pat Gum, Special Education Director  
Leslie Chumrau Jackson, Program Coordinator

From: Susan Madden, Quality Improvement Specialist  
Developmental Disabilities Program

Subject: Comprehensive Evaluation of Early Childhood Intervention's (ECI) Part  
C Services

This review consists of a summary of information sent into the Developmental Disabilities Program through out the year as well as information gathered during the file review and home visits made in July and August of 2005. I found a high performance and compliance with the state and federal regulations for Part C services.

I visited 2 families in their homes along with the Family Support Specialist and one parent at the Early Childhood Intervention facility. The sample families were selected randomly by ECI and DDP staff as per the monitoring guidelines. It was a pleasure to meet the families and hear about as well as see their interactions with their Family Support Specialists (FSSes). The FSSes had scheduled the visits to accommodate the families. It was apparent the FSSes have developed and maintained respectful relationships with the children and their families.

#### FILE REVIEWS/ HOME VISITS

All files reviewed for children receiving the Part C services were complete with documentation of all contacts made or on behalf of the family. The documentation showed coordination and cooperation with other agencies. Individual Family Support Plans (IFSPs) were current for all the children reviewed. The IFSP's contained demographic, assessment summaries and a detailed description of the services

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provided. The IFSP's were reviewed and revised as required based on situation or family choice. Each file contained copies of invitations to the planning meetings sent out to the families

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two weeks in advance. Each case file had documentation of family rights and complaint procedures having been provided to the families. The files reviewed reflected compliance with the federal guidelines for initial contact, completing eligibility, assessments, developing plans and implementing services or had documentation as to why the timelines could not be met. In this review, I found one case of documenting in this regard, which was delayed by a medical surgery out of state. Although all file information was available, in one case this took some searching as well as requesting of the FSS to find some items from her working file or desk. This file had multiple copies of the same information to sift through. Whenever several people do the same job their individual styles come into play. This could possibly be cleared up through your internal file review process. Only one of the sample files did not have an implementation date for the IFSP but other documentation showed it was being done.

Although the school district has a non-discriminatory policy it is not clearly stated in the ECI handbook. I would like to recommend adding this to the handbook.

Plans were written with family choosing outcomes for their ISFP. These plans were revised based on the child and family's changing needs and desires. Families reported confidentiality has been maintained by ECI staff and they all felt they could have access to any of the records on their child. Each family expressed confidence in their FSS and felt comfortable discussing issues with them.

The FSSes reported case load sizes at 1:18 or a little over. When fully staffed there are 9.25 full time staff which allows an average ratio of 1:16.22 which is below our contracted ratio.

Child find is done on an ongoing basis. We went to the Deaconess Billings Clinic to do an in-service with staff regarding Early Childhood Intervention. This has generated an increase in the number of referrals received at ECI. Posters were put up at the local hospitals, clinics and other referring programs. Other in-services regarding services for children with local pediatric groups as well as several day cares.

I found the home and family visits enlightening. The families all were secure in being the final decision makers but expressed appreciation for the guidance of the FSS in doing so. One mother told me she relies on the other team members input to make more informed decisions related to her daughter's services. The families work in collaboration with their FSSes. Each family member surveyed reported being treated with respect and felt their FSS explained information to them clearly. Families reported ECI helped in coordination with other agencies whenever applicable or requested.

All families were aware of the time-limitedness of Part C services. Those families whose children were nearing the end of this service were made aware of their next service options based on eligibility. Each family was clear participation in Part C services is

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voluntary and they chose to accept services. One family member whose child was aging out of Part C and didn't meet eligibility criteria to continue in services expressed their desire to continue even though it wasn't an option. The feedback was clear, ECI had assisted the family growth in a very positive way and the family gave ECI an A+.

## NATIONAL ACCREDITATIONS

Since the State of Montana no longer requires provider agencies to maintain National Accreditation, ECI as a part of the Billings School District, opted not to continue this accreditation.

## CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

ECI does surveys of families having received support through their agency. I reviewed two survey results, one for families still receiving support and one for families exiting services. These surveys indicated to me that most families are satisfied with the services ECI provides with the Part C funding. There were a couple of comments regarding improving the availability of speech therapists and the need for more input on plans from the families. ECI is now contracting with community vendors for speech therapy. This service is now being accessed within 2 weeks.

## FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES ADVISORY COUNCIL PARENT REPRESENTATIVE INPUT

Numerous attempts were made to contact \_\_\_\_\_, the Family Support Services Advisory Council Parent Representative, over the course of this process to no avail. At this time he does not have a telephone.

## INTERNAL EVALUATIONS

ECI does internal evaluations of their staff on a routine basis. Ongoing peer records reviews also occur routinely. Doing these reviews internally monitors such items as the initial family contacts and meeting the timelines for completion of the IFS and the IFS goal completion.

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## CONTACT DOCUMENTATION

This section relates to the contacts our agency receives from outside sources about ECI. Our office has not had any contacts regarding ECI.

## LICENSING INFORMATION

This section does not apply as ECI does not do placements. They do work in foster homes with the placements made through Child and Family Services.

## FINANCIAL AUDITS

ECI's end of the year financial report for FY05 was received on time. The DPHHS auditor preformed a

desk review of the Billings Public Schools Internal Audit for FY03. While the audit was felt to be acceptable, 2 reported conditions were identified. The auditor commented that there were 8 findings which were not material, but lead the auditor to have some concerns about the level of internal controls in the school district.

#### FAMILY SUPPORT SPECIALIST CERTIFICATION

I was able to verify that all staff are either certified or are in the process of being certified as required. ECI also provided the certificates for all staff.

#### CRISIS RESPONSE INFORMATION

ECI has utilized the Montana Rescue Mission as a resource to access gas vouchers and their food pantry for families in need. They have accessed funding through PLUK for families to attend conferences. They have found PLUK to be a great support.

#### INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

As per the incident management policy, ECI has developed a committee to review all incident reports. Inquiries of incidents are made weekly at staff meetings and at the time of this report, no incidents have occurred. ECI will be sending minutes of any incident management committee meetings to the Quality Improvement Specialist routinely.

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#### CONCLUSION

I found excellent compliance with the federal requirements for Part C services. Families reported high level of satisfaction with ECI's services. There continues to be excellent team work amongst staff at ECI as well as with other agencies. I would suggest the non-discriminatory policy be added to the ECI handbook. ECI is very conscientious about notifying the Regional Office about changes in services to children on the Client Status Sheets. As the funding source, I am very pleased with the services ECI delivers to families. I would like to thank the staff for your cooperation and assistance in setting up home visits as well as helping navigate your files.

CC: Suzn Gehring  
Erica Swanson  
Tim Plaska